



Remembered: David's Kindness Toward Mephibosheth Behold Our God! – Read the Bible for Life Series #19

2 Samuel 9

Pastor David Sunday

February 12, 2012

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail—
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.

(Speak, O Lord by Keith Getty)

Lord, we've confessed wonderful things about Your Word just now. It's power; it's efficacy; it's ability to transform our lives and renew our minds. It's ability to build the church until the earth is filled with Your glory. So Lord, as Your Word is opened now, we pray that it would come to us and that we would receive it, not as the word of men, but what it really is—the Word of God. We ask that Your Spirit would bring full conviction and illumination upon our minds and hearts. And bring about the obedience that comes through faith for the sake of the name of Jesus. Amen.

Our Scripture reading this morning comes from 2 Samuel 9. We've been reading through the Bible as a congregation and the sermons this year are coming out of the Scripture passages, especially those that display the character of God as this passage remarkably does. We are going to stand together now as we read God's Word beginning at verse one. Hear the Word of the living God:

And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"² Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."³ And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet."⁴ The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."⁵ Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.⁶ And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant."⁷ And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always."⁸ And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?"

⁹ Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson."¹⁰ And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.¹² And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants.¹³ So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

This is God's holy Word; let us thank Him for it.

We have come to one of the most moving and beautiful stories in the Old Testament. It's about a man whose name is hard to pronounce but its meaning is easy to understand once you know his story. His name was Mephibosheth which means "seething shame" or "one who scatters shame" or "from the mouth of shame." The most formative years of his life were spent in seclusion because he was the lone surviving heir of King Saul's household, living in a time when his late grandfather's legacy was seething with shame.

In Mephibosheth we find a potential rival to the throne of King David. He's a man whose uncle—Ish-bosheth which also includes the word shame—had been assassinated by

David's soldiers contrary to the king's orders. They delivered Uncle Ish-bosheth's head to King David with these ominous words found in 2 Samuel 4:8: "*Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring.*" It's no wonder that Mephibosheth (whose name sounds a lot like his uncle's name) spent his growing up years in hiding, seething with shame.

But 2 Samuel 9 is not a story about shame; it's a story about searching. David is seeking to find someone in order to give him something—kindness to be precise. For emphasis, this is repeated three times. Look at verse one: "*David said, 'Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?'*" Then in verse three, "*And the king said, 'Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?'*" And again in verse seven, "*And David said to him, 'Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan...'*"

So this is a story about kindness but it's not mere, ordinary kindness. There's nothing bland or vanilla about it. This is the same word we looked at last week—the Hebrew word "hesed" which speaks of affection, love and kindness. But it's more than just affection—it's affection that is fortified with dependability. It's an affection that is fortified by stability, unswerving commitment, steady reliability and loyalty.

I found this description from Eugene Peterson helpful: "*Hesed* is love without regard to shifting circumstances, hormones, emotional states and personal convenience." This is the kind of love with which "*God so loved the world*" (John 3:16). It's a love that Mephibosheth had known very little of in the course of his lifetime. So as we speak about kindness this morning, realize we're talking about something profound, something so deep that it can only be perfectly understood when we look at the kindness God has shown to sinners when His Son the Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life on the cross to redeem us, to reconcile us to God.

Do you realize in Ephesians 2:7, it says that God saved us "*so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*"? So all throughout eternity we're going to be watching and marveling at this display of God's kindness that He has shown us in Christ Jesus. This kindness will be our theme for all eternity. We'll never stop being amazed so let's start marveling at it today as we look at four elements of God's kindness through the lens of this poignant story of a mighty king and a crippled man.

First, we're going to trace the origins of God's kindness in this story. Second, we're going to look at how we move from the outskirts of God's kindness into the heart of God's kindness. Thirdly, experiencing the outpouring of God's kindness and finally, testing the operations of God's kindness in our lives. May the Lord help us as we consider these things from His Word this morning.

1. Tracing the Origins of God's Kindness

In Mephibosheth's life, David's kindness was determined long before he knows the king; perhaps it was before he was even born. It might have been when he was an infant that his father Jonathan made a covenant with David. We read of that covenant last week in 1 Samuel 20 where we saw David and Jonathan about to part ways because David has to flee the envious rage of Jonathan's father, King Saul. But before they part ways, Jonathan anticipates the time when David will be raised to the throne and he enters into this covenant; he asks David to confirm this covenant with him. In 1 Samuel 20:14, Jonathan says to David, "*If I am still alive [when you are raised up], show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not die; and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.*" So there's going to come a time when the roles are going to be reversed. Jonathan, who right now is the son of the king, is going to be in danger of being cut off and he's saying, "David, when you're raised up, remember me."

Then look at verse 17, "*And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.*" So they make this promise that David will be faithful, not only to Jonathan but also to Jonathan's descendants. Now when we come to 2 Samuel, it's been at least 15 years since the covenant has been made. We know it's a lot later because Mephibosheth now has a child of his own named Mica (9:12) and the questions going through our minds should be, "Is David going to keep his promise? Will he remember his covenant with Jonathan?"

I heard Tim Keller describe the difference between a consumer relationship and a covenant relationship. A consumer relationship is when you look to someone to supply your needs and as long as they're giving you what you want at a price you feel is fair, you keep up the relationship. But when they stop meeting your needs, you end the relationship and you go to someone else. So in the consumer relationship, you sacrifice the relationship

if it's not meeting your needs. In our economy, there's plenty of room for those types of relationships. If you don't like the pizza at one place, you go to another if you can get a better price and better pizza and no one is offended by that. But the problem is, in our consumer society, we too often treat our human relationship as consumers. We can treat our relationship to our church like a consumer. We can treat our relationship to marriage like a consumer.

The difference between a consumer relationship and a covenant relationship is this. In a covenant relationship, you sacrifice your needs in order to maintain the relationship. You don't sacrifice the relationship if it's not meeting your needs. You sacrifice your needs in order to sustain the relationship. You serve; you maintain; you are committed to that relationship even when it's not meeting your needs.

The question is, will David treat this relationship with Jonathan like a consumer or will he remember the covenant. Will he keep his word? No one is expecting him to; probably no one even knows he made this covenant. Lots of years have passed; circumstances have changed.

Politicians do this all the time; we're going to hear a lot of promises this year that are going to be broken next year, from all kinds of people. In 1932, candidate Franklin Roosevelt gave a speech in Pittsburgh where he was arguing for restraint in government spending. Four years later President Roosevelt wanted to go back to Pittsburgh and make a speech where he would argue for increases in government spending. He said to his advisor, "What should I do? How can I make an about face without looking two-faced?" No politician wants to be called a flip-flopper, right? Do you know what the advisor told him? "Deny that you made a speech in Pittsburgh in 1932." Times haven't changed that much even though there are internet records today. They just deny their words. Forget about their words and go back on their words.

David could have easily forgotten his promise; he could have denied it. He could have concluded it was no longer expedient. The same thing could happen to you in your relationships. Have you ever gotten a raise or promotion or climbed a few rungs up the social ladder and forgotten about a friend you once held dear? Have you ever discarded a relationship because it no longer felt like it was meeting your needs or you no longer needed that relationship? Have you ever lightly walked away from a covenant relationship? Do you bring a consumer mindset to your covenant relationships? This is the spirit of the age.

In the movie, Out of Africa, Robert Redford says to Meryl Streep when she's asking him to marry her, "Do you think I'll love you more because of a piece of paper?" That's the way we look at our relationships—forgetting that the purpose of the piece of paper is not to regulate the intensity of the relationship but to protect the security of the relationship. That piece of paper represents the promise to "...be with you in sickness and health, in plenty and want, for richer, for poorer, 'til death do us part—you can count on me to keep my word." That's a covenant relationship.

In light of the power that David now has and the amount of time that has elapsed, it's nothing short of a wonder that he says these words in 2 Samuel 9:1: "*Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?*" Like God, David remembers his covenant forever. He does not forget the promise he has made to Jonathan.

Likewise God has made a covenant of redemption with Christ, His Son, in which He has said, "Son, if you will go and die and lay down Your life for My people, I will accept them in You, the Beloved. I will lavish on them the riches of My kindness. I will pour out on them the glories of My grace and whoever comes to me through You, Jesus, I will not cast away." God has made a covenant—a covenant to show kindness to those who come to Him through Jesus. A covenant that was made long before we knew Him, before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1 makes it clear that we who have trusted in Christ are heirs of this covenant—of this kindness that has been promised in Christ. It was promised to us before we ever knew Him and even today, God is saying, "Is there anyone at New Covenant Bible Church to whom I can show my kindness? Is there anyone here in this congregation who needs to experience the kindness of the Lord? Come to Jesus. Put your faith in Him and you will find that He is a God who is actively on the lookout to lavish His kindness on needy people crippled by sin and the fall. He will lavish His kindness on you. Do you hear Him calling? Is He pursuing you today?"

The origins of this kindness go all the way back to a covenant made long ago. Sadly many of us live on the outskirts of that kindness.

2. Moving from the Outskirts of God's Kindness

It's possible to be an heir of the kindness of God but to be living as an alien and an outcast; to be estranged from the One Who is determined to do you good. That's in fact

how we all are by nature. We are in the words of Ephesians 2:12, “...*strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*” Yet God’s kindness is near. You can’t live in the world today without being somehow under the influence of the kindness of God. Psalm 145 says His kindness is over all His works but a lot of us by nature live at a distance. Sin puts us at a distance; estranged from the kindness of God.

I grew up in the outskirts of Chicago in Kenosha, Wisconsin—the first city across the state line by the lake. On a really clear day, we could look down the lakeshore and see faint silhouettes of the Hancock Building and Sears Tower. We were in the outskirts of the city. We watched Chicago’s TV stations; we heard Chicago’s news. We knew all about Mayors Jayne Byrne and Ed Vrodolyak and the snow storms back in the 1970’s. We cheered for Chicago sports teams (unless there was a better alternative up north). We experienced some of Chicago’s culture through field trips and visits but we weren’t really at home in Chicago. We didn’t live there. Most of us weren’t comfortable driving in the city nor were we comfortable having those people driving in our city. The people talked differently; the pace of life was more hectic. Chicago felt like a very unfamiliar place to me when I lived there as a student at Moody Bible Institute. It took a while to settle in and feel at home in the city even though I lived in the outskirts of it all my life.

Many of us are like that with the kindness of God. We live on the outskirts, failing to see or recognize or be at home in His presence. And this was Mephibosheth’s condition for many years of his life. Look back at 2 Samuel 4 and we’ll see where Mephibosheth’s alienation began. It was when he was a kindergartener—just five years old. We read in verse four, “*Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel...*” That was the terrible news that his father and grandfather had been killed in battle. This was fearful news because it meant the Philistines could be breathing down their necks at any moment. It also meant that some of the gorilla warriors who were fighting for David would also be on the lookout for anyone who belonged to the house of Saul. So when the news of Jonathan’s and Saul’s deaths came, “...*his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame.*” She grabbed him so quickly that she must have dropped the poor little boy and the fall was so severe, the bones were broken so severely and the care he received afterwards was so sparse that he remained crippled for the rest of his life; unable to walk properly after this incident when he was only five years old.

So here's the only living heir of the great house of Saul but now nobody can know about it. Mephibosheth's identity has to be concealed. He has to go far from Jerusalem and live way out in the middle of nowhere. In an instant, all the privileges of living in the royal family are removed from him. By the time we get to 2 Samuel 9, Mephibosheth is a grown man. Verse 12 says he had a young son whose name was Mica. Verse four says he was living, not in his own home but, "*He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.*" He's a helpless dependent and he's living in a place called Lo-debar which means "no word" or "no pasture" or simply "nothing." It was a wretched, arid, no-man's land. The former young prince is now a dependent, helpless cripple, seething with shame in a dry and dusty desert town named Nothing. He's about as far on the outskirts of kindness as a person can get.

It's then that an unwelcome interruption comes into his daily drudgery. He hears a knock on the door and there's a summons from the king, "David wants to see you. You've got to come now. The entourage is waiting outside." Mephibosheth is carried to the king's entourage; he's put on a horse or donkey and with every step toward Jerusalem, terror is rising in his heart. "Now what?" The foreign policy of that day was typically consolidation through liquidation. Consolidate your power by liquidating your enemies—get rid of them. It's no wonder that by the time Mephibosheth appears in David's presence, he is beside himself with fear. Verse six tells us, "*And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.*" I can just picture him throwing his crutches aside and falling flat on his face before the king, trembling.

What a surprise it must have been for him to hear the words that came out of the king's mouth! "Mephibosheth!" "David knows my name. Who told him?" There's no sign in the text that Ziba the servant told the king the guy's name. Maybe David remembers the day Jonathan came running to him, beaming from ear to ear, and said, "David, I've got to tell you, my wife had a baby boy last night. His name is Mephibosheth." Perhaps David remembered the joy of that day. But here he is, falling flat on his face before David thinking, "Surely I'm a goner. This is the end of me." But then he hears these wonderful words; the words that the angels spoke when the Savior was born; words that are repeated 365 times in Scripture—one for every day of the year. "Do not fear." David said to Mephibosheth, "*Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan...*" David was assuring him, "I haven't forgotten my covenant; I remember. I'm going to show kindness to you."

Until you are persuaded that God is no longer angry with you because of your sins, you will always stay at a distance from God. The truth is, sin brings us under the wrath of God and fills us with a terror of God as well it should. But as long as that terror and dread remain in your heart, as long as you are persuaded that God is against you and not for you, you will stay as far away from the center of God's presence as you possibly can. But there is a way for that wrath to be removed and for you to be reconciled to the Father. There is a way for Him to no longer look at you with anger but with kindness in His heart because of Christ's work on the cross. When you accept this by faith, you are a new man; you have a new beginning.

Martin Luther once said, "If I could believe that God was no longer angry with me, I would stand on my head for joy. I'd do somersaults; I'd leap for joy if I could just know that God is no longer angry with me." Then in God's perfect timing, the glorious light of the gospel broke through to Martin Luther and he saw the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and not counting men's sins against them anymore. For the sake of what Jesus had done, God would turn away His wrath from sinners and accept them as His beloved children. When Martin Luther laid hold of that gospel truth, he was filled with joy unspeakable. It was then he was able to write words like this,

O gracious God,
I am fully aware that I am unworthy.
I deserve to be a brother of Satan and not of Christ.
But Christ, your dear Son died and rose for me.
I am his brother.
He earnestly desires that I should believe in him,
without doubt and fear.

I need no longer regard myself
as unworthy and full of sin.
For this I love and thank him from my heart.

Praise be to the faithful Savior,
for he is so gracious and merciful
as are you and the Holy Spirit in eternity.
Amen.

(Martin Luther, from *Luther's Prayers*)

We can join saints like Martin Luther and sing,

Oh the depth of the riches
The wisdom of God
How immeasurable is His grace

How unfailing His kindness
So far removed His wrath
And His mercies are new each day

(Romans Doxology by John Elliott)

God has moved Mephibosheth from the outskirts into the center of the city where His kindness will be lavished on him.

3. Experiencing the Outpouring of God's Kindness

In verse seven we see God's kindness poured out. Mephibosheth could not have imagined in his wildest dreams that he was being brought into David's court in order to be loved; in order to be lavished upon. He's encountering a different kind of king here; a king who himself has tasted of the kindness of God; a king who has said, "*The Lord is my Shepherd* [He meets all my needs... He] *prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies*; [He] *anoints my head with oil; my cup overflows*" [Psalm 23].

King David wants to shower Mephibosheth with the same goodness and mercy and kindness that have pursued him all the days of his life and he does it in three ways. We see these in verse seven.

First, he **pardons** Mephibosheth. That's what's behind those words, "Do not fear. Yes, you're part of an enemy's household. Yes, you belong to the rebel clan. Yes, I could destroy you but I've made a covenant with your father who laid down his life for me in battle so do not fear. You're pardoned, Mephibosheth. You're welcome here." That's the first thing—God's kindness begins with pardon for sin.

Then it continues with **provision**. Look at verse seven: "*Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father...* I'm going to make you rich, Mephibosheth. You're going to be well provided for. You're going to have a glorious inheritance." David's kindness continues with provision, then...

Thirdly, this lavish kindness culminates in **adoption**. J.I. Packer said something like, "If you want to see how well a person understands the gospel, see how much they make of being an adopted child of God because this is the chief privilege." We are His sons and daughters. We are welcome in His house and seated at His table. And that's what David does for Mephibosheth. He says, "I'm going to make you rich and, *you shall eat at my table*

always... I'm going to treat you as a member of my royal family. You're going to always eat here at my table." That's how Mephibosheth experiences God's kindness, pardon, provision and adoption.

One outline I read expresses the grace God showed him so beautifully. "David sought him; he sent for him; he spoke to him and he spared him. Then he gave him a new place, a new provision and a new parent." As I read that, I thought, "This is my story, this is my song." God sought me, sent for me—I came trembling—He spoke words of grace to me. He spared me from His wrath. Then He gave me a new place, seated with Christ in the heavenly places. He gave me a new provision, lavished with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. And He is my new Parent, "*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, That we should be called children of God...*" (1 John 3:1). That is who we are. Oh the wonder that I, a child of wrath and hell, should be called a child of God!

How do you know if you've experienced this kindness? How do you know if you've been ravished by it? How can you test the operations of God's kindness in your life? That brings us to our last point...

4. Testing the Operations of God's Kindness

How do you know if God's kindness is operating on you and in you and through you? I see three indications in Mephibosheth's life that God's kindness is operating in him and making him a whole new man.

First, **the test of abasement**. The first thing God's kindness is leading you to is repentance. It makes you humble before the Lord. It empties you of your self-righteousness and pride. It makes you sorrowful over your sinful condition. You do not think you deserve any of it and that was Mephibosheth's experience. Look at how he responds to this lavish display of kindness in verse eight: "*And he paid homage and said, 'What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?'*" Some people said, "Oh, Mephibosheth's self-image was way too low." That's not the case at all. The cross of Christ brings us down; it brings us low. It brings us to the very feet of the Lord where we say, "God, I am base. I am barren. I am impotent. I am lost. I am a dog. I am dead and lifeless apart from You." The cross always humbles us.

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of Glory died;
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

(When I Survey the Wondrous Cross by Isaac Watts)

Have you ever been abased in God's presence? Have you ever fallen on your face before Him? Have you ever asked, "Who am I that you should treat me thus? I don't deserve this."

The second is that **test of acceptance**. Have you accepted the kindness that God has offered in Christ? Mephibosheth does just that. Look at the second part of verse 11: "*So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.*" He didn't say, "David, I appreciate the expression of your heart and your offer but look at me. I'm a cripple; I can't go in there. I can't eat at your table. I can't act like I'm part of your family. Nice offer but I'm going to stay at a distance."

That's what some people do when they hear the gospel. They think, "That sounds too good to be true" so they stay at a distance. Mephibosheth says, "I'm a cripple but I'm going in. I'm going to eat there." Verse 13 stresses it again: "*So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem...*" He lived in the king's courts. And "*...he ate always at the king's table.*" This was a regular thing for him—three square meals a day feasting on the goodness of the king's household; drinking from the river of his delights (Psalm 36:8). Oh, how precious that lovingkindness.

Notice that Mephibosheth's condition did not change. The last phrase of the chapter says, "*Now he was lame in both his feet.*" He stayed a cripple but he had a new status—he was now a child of the king. The point no longer was that he was a cripple because his crippled feet were covered up by the tablecloth of grace that hid his shame. He was a new man now.

We still struggle with the shame of our indwelling sin; we still wrestle with the crippling deformities of sin but we've now been welcomed into our Father's family and we're feasting at our Father's table and we're the recipients of our Father's mercy in Christ and the fact of our indwelling sin is only temporary. Right now, the fact of our indwelling sin is covered by grace—by the tablecloth of the grace of our Lord Jesus. So we come; we receive; we accept.

Finally, the **test of all-satisfying love**. There's one more place you've got to see—2 Samuel 19:24—where Mephibosheth is mentioned once more. The context here is much

later in David's life. There has been a civil war and Absalom, David's son, has revolted against his father and has tried to usurp his throne. David has been forced to flee from Jerusalem, running from his own son. Those who are loyal to David are running along with him but somehow Mephibosheth ends up being left behind in Jerusalem. Ziba, the servant who had to give all this stuff to Mephibosheth back in chapter nine, tries to take advantage of the fact that Mephibosheth is no longer with David. In chapter 16 he slanders Mephibosheth and accuses him before David of trying to take control of the throne. David sadly believes Ziba and gives him the whole inheritance. He says, "Okay, you can have all of it." But then soon Absalom is squashed and David finds himself back in Jerusalem and there's Mephibosheth, hardly looking like he was getting ready to take over the kingdom.

Look at these amazing words in 19:24: "*And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety.*" He's been grieving the absence of his king; he's been longing for David's return. Verses 25-26, "*And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, 'Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?' He answered, 'My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame.*" But then the donkey wasn't there and Mephibosheth was left behind.

Verse 27: "*He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. For all my father's house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. [Mephibosheth has never stopped being amazed at that.] What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?" And the king [who had a whole of problems to deal with at that moment and did not have time to figure out this dispute between Ziba and Mephibosheth] said to him, 'Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land.'* [You'll take half of the inheritance; he will take the other half. The deal is done. You're both welcome back in my house; let's move on.]"

Mephibosheth shows his true heart in verse 30. He shows this relationship with David is not a consumer relationship but is a covenant relationship. He shows that he's not with David as long as David meets his needs; he shows he's with David in covenant loyalty forever. Look at these beautiful words: "*And Mephibosheth said to the king, 'Oh, let him*

take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home'... That's all I care about. You're back, my king. And I'm with you."

Isn't that how we feel about Jesus? "You've come, my Lord, my King, to save me from my sins and You're coming again so I can live with you forever. Jesus, that's all I need. I'm satisfied with You."

This is the test of whether God's kindness has ravished your heart. When He doesn't give you what you want, are you satisfied just to have Him? Can you say, "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21)? He is all to me.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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